

**Purpose and Need**  
**Walnut Water Haul #2**  
**Tonto Basin Ranger District**

**Date:** 4/12/2021

**ID Team Leader:** Eric Hoskins/Crystal Martinez

**Project Name:** Walnut Water Haul #2

**Project type:** Structural Range Improvement

**Target start date:** May 1<sup>st</sup> 2021

**Target finish date:** October 30<sup>th</sup> 2022

Expected NEPA Documentation Type: Categorical Exclusion (DM required)

If Categorical Exclusion, select Category: 32.2 (9) Implement or modify minor management practices for range allotment when no allotment mgmt plan

**Project location:** The Walnut Water Haul #2 project is located on the Walnut allotment of the Tonto Basin Ranger District, Tonto National Forest. This project is located off of Forest Service road 71 also locally know and the Greenback Valley Road.

The legal location is T7N, R11E, Sec. 33

**Vegetation type:** Sonoran Desert Scrub

**Existing Condition**

The Walnut grazing allotment located on the Tonto Basin Ranger District is permitted for 150 Cows/calves and 119 yearlings with an Allotment Management Plan signed in 2016. The basic goal of the management plan is to improve resource conditions on the Walnut Allotment while maintaining a viable livestock operation. As indicated in the AMP signed in 2016, additional water developments are key to making this a successfully run Allotment.

Due to limited water sources and a severe drought in 2018, additional waters were authorized on the Walnut Allotment to help alleviate the current drought conditions with the idea of creating a better distribution of livestock to more fully take advantage of the forage within pastures. Livestock did distribute more evenly throughout the pasture and more forage became accessibly due to distance from water. However since some improvements were located right off of F.S. Road 71 which is a main well kept road, livestock started getting hit by vehicles traveling at night at high speeds on this road with four cows needing to be put down just since the start of this year.

**Desired Conditions**

The main desired condition for this project is to move livestock waters further away from the F.S. 71 road to reduce vehicle collisions. Additionally, as described in the Tonto National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan on replacement page 42. Standards and guidelines state that a minimum of four waters per section and one water per section in big game key areas should be provided. In management area 6J livestock should be managed at Level D. Level D management for livestock includes:

*Management seeks to optimize production and utilization of forage allocated for livestock use consistent with maintaining the environment and providing the multiple use of the range. From all existing range and livestock management technology, practices may be selected and used to develop cost effective methods for achieving improved forage supplies and uniform livestock distribution and forage use... Cultural practices may be combined with fencing and water developments to implement complex grazing systems and management methods.*

The Tonto National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan states that rangeland in less than satisfactory condition will be treated with improved grazing management along with the installation of structural and non-structural improvements (pg 195). Also to develop structural improvements in association with AMP's to maintain utilization at levels appropriate with management intensity and AMP objectives.

### **Current Management Direction**

The Walnut grazing allotment has an active term grazing permit with an Allotment Management Plan signed in 2016. Part of that management plan authorizes adaptive management that “includes monitoring to determine whether identified structural improvements are necessary or need to be modified. Structural range improvements will be constructed in accordance with Environmental Assessment and would require to meet Forest Service Standards. Additional input may be required from the interdisciplinary team to determine the best implementation and mitigation practices to follow when constructing new range improvements.

### **Purpose and Need**

The purpose of this project is to reduce conflicts with recreational users, facilitate recreational uses and to provide a watering site for livestock further away from the 71 road. There is a need reduce livestock and vehicle collisions that are occurring on F.S. Road 71.

### **Proposed Action**

This project consists of adding two new livestock troughs and approximately 1/2 mile of HDPE pipe above ground that will be connected to a previously authorized temporary water storage tank located just off F.S. road 71. The ground at the trough location will be hand leveled. With the trough and the pipeline being installed by horseback. No vegetation clearing besides that right at the trough site is anticipated.

### **Design Features**

The pipe will be no less than HDPE 200psi 1” and will be laid above ground by hand or horseback. No road access will be authorized to transport the trough or the pipeline into place. The trough must be level and have a functional access and escape ramp for wildlife. The trough must have a functional float that keeps water from overflowing.

### **Implementation Timeline:**

Initial Scoping should be completed by May 1<sup>st</sup> 2021 and implementation is expected to begin by September 1<sup>st</sup> 2021

Please send your questions, concerns, or mitigations to:

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